
SECTION IV. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS – LEADING THE PROCESS

This section of the *Guide for Implementing Urban Education Reform in Abbott Districts*:

- Suggests an approach for the organizational structure of School Management Teams (SMTs) and work groups;
- Describes the membership and responsibilities of the SMT; and
- Offers helpful hints on SMT membership, training and meetings.

Regulations Related to Section IV N.J.A.C. 6A:24

- 2.1 – Establishment of School Management Teams
- 2.2 – Responsibilities of School Management Teams
- 2.3 – Training of School Management Teams
- 4.1 – Implementation of WSR Model
- 4.2 – Whole School Alternative Program Design
- 4.3 – Submission of WSR Implementation Plan
- 4.4 – School-based Budgets
- 4.5 – WSR Implementation Issues
- 5.1 – Demonstration of Particularized Need
- 6.1 – Implementation of Required Programs in Secondary Schools

A. PURPOSE OF THE SMT

A School Management Team plans and implements ways to increase a school's effectiveness. The concept of representative teams is intended to increase the involvement and contributions of more people in the planning of improved programs and practices. The logic of the team approach is that programs are more likely to be successful when the people who must ultimately implement them have planned them. It is, therefore, the purpose of the SMT to ensure participation of staff, parents and the community in school-level decision-making and to develop a culture of cooperation, accountability and commitment. Within the school, the SMT is responsible for coordinating the development of the school's shared vision, selecting a WSR model, and establishing a WSR Implementation Plan. In addition, the SMT, working with the school administration, SRI team, and district, is responsible for the ongoing monitoring and assessment of the quality and effectiveness of the school's plan and program and the implementation of any needed modifications.

B. ORGANIZATION OF THE SMT

The regulations state that the Chief School Administrator (CSA) in each Abbott district shall submit annually to the DOE for approval, with a copy to the Board of Education, a procedure or an amendment to the existing procedure for the selection, training and operation of a building-based School Management Team (SMT) in every school. The procedures submitted must be consistent with state regulations (see Section III for regulations).

C. MEMBERSHIP OF THE SMT

According to the regulations:

- SMT membership shall include the building principal, teachers, school-level support staff, parents, and community members. The SMT may include students. No one group identified above may constitute 50 percent or more of the SMT membership (see table below). Board of education members shall not serve on the SMT. A school district employee shall not serve as either a parent or a community member on an SMT in that district. The makeup of the SMT should also be consistent with guidelines set out in the WSR model selected.

Total Membership In the SMT	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	17-18	19-20	21-22	23-24
Maximum # from One Constituency	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

- SMT members shall be chosen by either selection or election as follows:
 1. The community shall be meaningfully involved in the process.
 2. The principal shall provide broad-based notice prior to initiation of the process.
 3. Teaching staff members shall be chosen by teachers. School-level support staff members shall be chosen by school-level support staff. Parent members shall be chosen by parents. If a sufficient number of parents is not chosen by parents, the principal may select the remaining parent members. For a student to be on the SMT, the student shall be chosen by students.

4. Community members shall be selected by the principal after the principal solicits a broad base of community members for their interest in participating on the SMT.
 5. The membership of the SMT shall be broad-based and representative of the student and community's racial and ethnic composition.
- Terms of office for SMT members shall be a minimum of two (2) years except that, for initial selection or election of the SMT, staggered terms shall be provided to ensure continuity of the SMT.
 - A mechanism shall be established for the selection and removal of team members when appropriate. No member of the SMT may be removed without the concurrence of the School Review and Improvement (SRI) team except as provided for in *N.J.A.C. 6A:24-2.3 (d)*. The SMT shall notify the SRI team if any difficulties arise as to the functioning of the SMT.
 - Any currently constituted SMT which is not in compliance with the above shall jointly implement a transition plan to bring the SMT into compliance. This may include requests for appropriate waivers pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6:3A*.

Helpful Hints SMT Membership

It is recommended that the total SMT membership be kept at a workable size. Much of the work should be done by work groups, with membership on the work groups open to all members of the school community. Participation in work groups will engage more members of the school community in the work of the school.

Districts may also institute a district steering committee to coordinate WSR activities and facilitate the effective functioning of the SMTs. This steering committee would provide support for the SMTs in assessing effectiveness, identifying and resolving areas of concern, and implementing effective strategies, structures, systems and practices.

Helpful Hints Parent Involvement

“There are no unimportant adults in the life of a child,” said Ron Edmonds, a founder of the Effective Schools Movement (cited by Detroit Public Schools, 1989-1991). If one believes this statement and subscribes to the belief that schools are for teaching and learning for all, then it is reasonable to assume that parents are also important adults and should have a role in the school improvement process. Not only do parents have a right to be informed and involved, schools need them.

Keeping all stakeholders informed of the developmental steps of student improvement helps to alleviate misconceptions and defuse possible resistance due to lack of knowledge and understanding.

Outreach to parents and community members may take place by the following means:

- Presenting brief programs to local service organizations;
- Including school improvement updates in various media releases;
- Having school improvement updates in parent newsletters;
- Having an effective school bulletin board prominently displayed; and/or
- Developing a school improvement logo reflecting the mission or shared values and using the logo on all communications.

D. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SMT

In its various capacities, the SMT members will take on the roles of educational and instructional guides, decision-makers, problem-solvers, assessors, evaluators, and planners. **The principal does not abdicate administrative and supervisory responsibilities to the team. The daily operation of the school remains the responsibility of the principal.** The SMT creates an internal structure through which ideas from various perspectives flow to ensure that the WSR process has broad-based support. The SMT leads and coordinates each step of this process. (See Section III for SMT responsibilities in regulations):

1. **PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY—WSR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN** - It shall be the primary responsibility of the SMT of each WSR school to develop a WSR Implementation Plan based on a needs assessment. (See Section VIII and IX for further information). In addition to the development of the WSR Implementation Plan, the SMT shall also undertake the following responsibilities in consultation with its assigned SRI team and with district input and assistance:

- **CURRICULUM** - Ensure that curriculum, instruction and the instructional delivery systems are aligned with the CCCS. In this role, the SMT should be collaborating with central office staff who are responsible for ensuring articulation across grade levels, with WSR models, and with the district's curriculum;
 - **REVIEW OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT** - Review the statewide assessment results at the school and grade levels to determine program and curriculum needs and to take appropriate action to improve and enhance student achievement. The central office should also support the school's efforts in this area;
 - **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** - Ensure that a program of professional development to assist staff in the implementation of all aspects of WSR is being utilized by the school. The intent of professional development is to improve student performance;
 - **TECHNOLOGY PLAN** - For any school that does not already have an approved school-level educational technology plan, develop and submit to the DOE for approval, with a copy to the CSA and the board of education, a school-level educational technology plan. This plan must be integrated with the district-level educational technology plan. It must demonstrate how educational technology will be infused throughout all aspects of curriculum and instruction to support achievement of the CCCS, and provide for acquisition and maintenance of necessary equipment and infrastructure, appropriate professional development activities and designation of staff to implement technology activities. The school's technology coordinator should have a primary role in the development of this plan;
 - **CROSS-CONTENT WORKPLACE READINESS STANDARDS** - Ensure that education programs, including cocurricular and extracurricular activities, are provided to address the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards of the CCCS. At the secondary level, the curriculum should include the key School-to-Career and College Initiatives components: school-based learning, the opportunity for students to participate in a structured learning experience, and connecting activities (see Section IX for details); and
 - **REWARD SYSTEM** - Develop a school-based system of rewards consistent with the district-wide system of rewards established. This system should include recognition and reward for those individual teachers, parents and administrators that contribute to helping students attain the CCCS. The principal should assume a primary role along with the staff in establishing the system.
2. **BUDGET AND STAFFING** - In addition, the SMT of a WSR school shall be authorized to undertake the following responsibilities after a majority vote of its members and upon approval of the SRI team. (The SRI team shall not approve the SMT to undertake these responsibilities unless and until the SMT has had specific

training in these areas.) (See *Helpful Hints* for budget and personnel training that are contained in this section.)

- Approve a school-based budget.
- Recommend the appointment of a building principal, teaching staff members, and instructional aides. In each case, the SMT shall provide not fewer than three (3) candidates to the CSA, who may select one of the three candidates for recommendation to the board of education. The CSA may request additional candidates from the SMT. The CSA shall not recommend to the board any such candidates for appointment unless the SMT has recommended that candidate to the CSA.
- If the SMT in a WSR school does not exercise its option to be included in the decision-making on budget and personnel issues, the SMT shall be advised of the actions to be taken in these areas and given an opportunity to provide input. In such cases the principal shall be responsible for making decisions and/or recommendations.
- The SMT in a school that is not a WSR school shall work with the teaching staff members in the selection of the WSR model to be used by the school.

Helpful Hints Assessment and Evaluation

It is recommended that districts and SMTs establish procedures for assessing and evaluating the functioning and effectiveness of the SMT. SMTs evaluated as being ineffective should receive support and assistance from the SRI team and district to facilitate more effective functioning.

E. TRAINING OF THE SMT

In the roles of SMT members as leaders, decision-makers, evaluators, assessors and planners, a variety of skills is required. Proper training is essential to gain these skills. The following requirements are contained in the regulations:

- The district, in consultation with the SRI, shall provide training and technical support regarding the district's internal operating policies and procedures to SMT members in all WSR schools.
- The CSA shall ensure that sufficient time and resources are allocated to the SMT to enable it to perform its work (including development of a WSR implementation plan).
- The SMT training shall provide support for continued implementation of a WSR model or design.
- The SMT training shall include, but not be limited to:
 1. instruction regarding the roles, relationships and responsibilities of the SMT;
 2. development and implementation of the WSR Implementation Plan;
 3. needs assessment;
 4. particularized need;
 5. curriculum and instruction;
 6. teamwork; and
 7. consensus building.
- The training, if required, shall include personnel and school-based budgeting.

Helpful Hints Personnel Training for SMT Members

When an SMT elects to be involved in personnel, its training will need to include guidelines around confidentiality and all mandated personnel requirements. At a minimum, training for SMT members should include:

1. recruitment practices;
2. affirmative action;
3. screening of applications;
4. establishing interview committees;
5. interviewing protocols;
6. other internal operating policies and procedures related to personnel.

Helpful Hints

SMT School-based Budget Training

In addition to the budget training required in the regulations, it is recommended that the district provide training in the following areas for completion of budget work papers:

1. Understanding the role of needs assessment in establishing budget priorities for completing budget development;
2. Using tools such as current and previous year school-level expenditure reports and historical spending patterns for budget development;
3. Model requirements as they affect budget development;
4. Reviewing staffing patterns including current and proposed (based on model requirements), history on vacancies, retirements and determination of full-time employees (FTEs);
5. Understanding contract-related issues such as preparation period requirements and proposed increases;
6. Understanding mandated costs (e.g., bilingual and special education);
7. Determining unit costs per pupil for items such as instructional and library supplies, and textbooks;
8. Incorporating professional development costs – substitutes, stipends, travel, materials and consultants;
9. Including other required model costs such as professional assistance, instructional materials and equipment;
10. Calculating costs of field trips, assemblies and extracurricular programs;
11. Understanding and implementing reallocations of resources including blending of funds;
12. Understanding the need for and using empirical data to support expenditure requests such as particularized needs; and
13. Translating the school-based operating budget into the WSR section of the district's budget statement.

- The CSA shall notify the SRI team in writing when an SMT member has attended a training program that satisfies the training requirement and shall remove an SMT member who does not fulfill the training requirement. Any member so removed may appeal by filing a petition with the Commissioner. The CSA shall notify the SRI team, in writing, when SMT members have been removed pursuant to this provision.

Helpful Hints Training of SMT Members

It is recommended that the professional development program for SMT members be continuous, focused on student achievement of the CCCS, and based on ongoing professional renewal, thereby strengthening the knowledge base on effective practices and subject matter for teachers and administrators.

Other possible topics the SMTs may want to consider include:

1. Decision-making/ problem-solving;
2. assessment of CCCS implementation and alignment;
3. collecting and assessing data, including analysis of the school's test results on ESPA, GEPA and/or HSPA;
4. program assessment and evaluation;
5. facility planning;
6. addressing school climate; and
7. planning and implementing school improvement activities and related action plans.

For introductory training to be effective, it is recommended that it be of sufficient length and that it focus on the basic structure and systems of the SMT as required in the regulations. Further training in the areas listed above would also be helpful to enable the SMT to carry out important responsibilities. In all cases, the training should include participatory, hands-on learning activities in each area. The district's central office, with its expertise in the various areas, plays a critical role in this training.

Training in personnel and school-based budgeting should be provided for SMTs that have voted to accept responsibilities in these areas. However, it is recommended that every SMT receive some training in these areas before deciding to retain or delegate these responsibilities.

F. SMT MEETINGS

The regulations state the following regarding the governance of the SMT:

- The number of meetings, dates, locations and times shall be decided by a majority vote of the SMT members with a goal of maximizing attendance of members.
- The SMT shall make all reasonable efforts to notify the community of meeting dates, locations and times. The meetings shall be accessible to the public.
- An SMT may not hold a meeting unless a majority of the SMT members is present.

Helpful Hints SMT Meetings

The following hints, while not required, may be helpful to the SMT and school community:

- Meetings should focus on the instructional program.
- The SMT should consider meeting at least once per month.
- Whenever possible, provide an agenda in advance to all participants; in cases where this is not possible, use a blackboard or flipchart to print the agenda.
- Make sure the objectives of the meeting are reflected in any agenda. Try to be as specific as possible when thinking through your objectives.
- Budget time for each agenda item and stick to the designated schedule as much as possible. Time periods for each agenda item should be based on what you want to accomplish.
- Start a meeting as close to the designated starting time as possible.
- Make sure everyone is properly introduced: give name, constituent group and reason for being there.
- Begin each meeting by giving out the agenda. Make clear statements about what you want to accomplish (the objectives) in the meeting.
- Make sure someone takes notes. Notes need not be word for word. Capturing the key areas of discussion, recommendations and decisions on paper is desirable and should be evident in any follow-up information that is disseminated.
- Have a recorder use a flip chart to record key points and activities such as brainstorming results. Save these pages as a record or reminder of progress. You can repost the chart pages at subsequent meetings or have the pages typed and distributed.
- Call attention to unfinished business from previous meetings, even if it is to suggest that the item is to remain tabled for a later meeting.
- When giving assignments to individuals or work groups, make sure each assignment is clear. Be clear about the objectives and time frames for completion of the assignment.

Helpful Hints
SMT Meetings *(continued)*

- Check the status of the completion of given assignments prior to the time when reports are presented to the team. Give recognition to assignments well done. If there is a problem, never completely discard what has been done. Encourage members to suggest modifications that strengthen what has been presented.
- Periodically, cite progress to the team and its committees by giving status reports. Status reports should also include discussion of upcoming significant tasks.
- Copies of the agendas, follow-up notes, and/or minutes should be made available to the school community.
- For standard meeting procedures, consult the reference text, *Roberts Rules of Order*.

G. WORK GROUPS

Each SMT shall establish work groups (subcommittees), as needed, to address the various areas of SMT responsibility (such as curriculum, staff, and personnel). These work groups should include SMT members and non-SMT members to maximize participation by non-SMT members. Each work-group should reflect all constituent groups and stakeholders represented on the SMT. Work-group membership should be drawn from the entire school community to utilize the talents, abilities and interests of all individuals effectively. Figures C and D on the next two pages provide examples of process maps for WSR and the SMT work-group configurations for elementary schools and secondary schools, although such decisions are the responsibility of the SMT.

Sample School Management Team Structure Whole School Reform Process Map

Areas included in the main circle are matters that would likely be addressed by the SMT as a whole. Topics listed in the 6 outer circles are matters that would likely be addressed by work groups, which would then report back to the SMT for review and approval. The boxes below the circle represent the other key players in the process who need to interact and work in a collaborative manner.

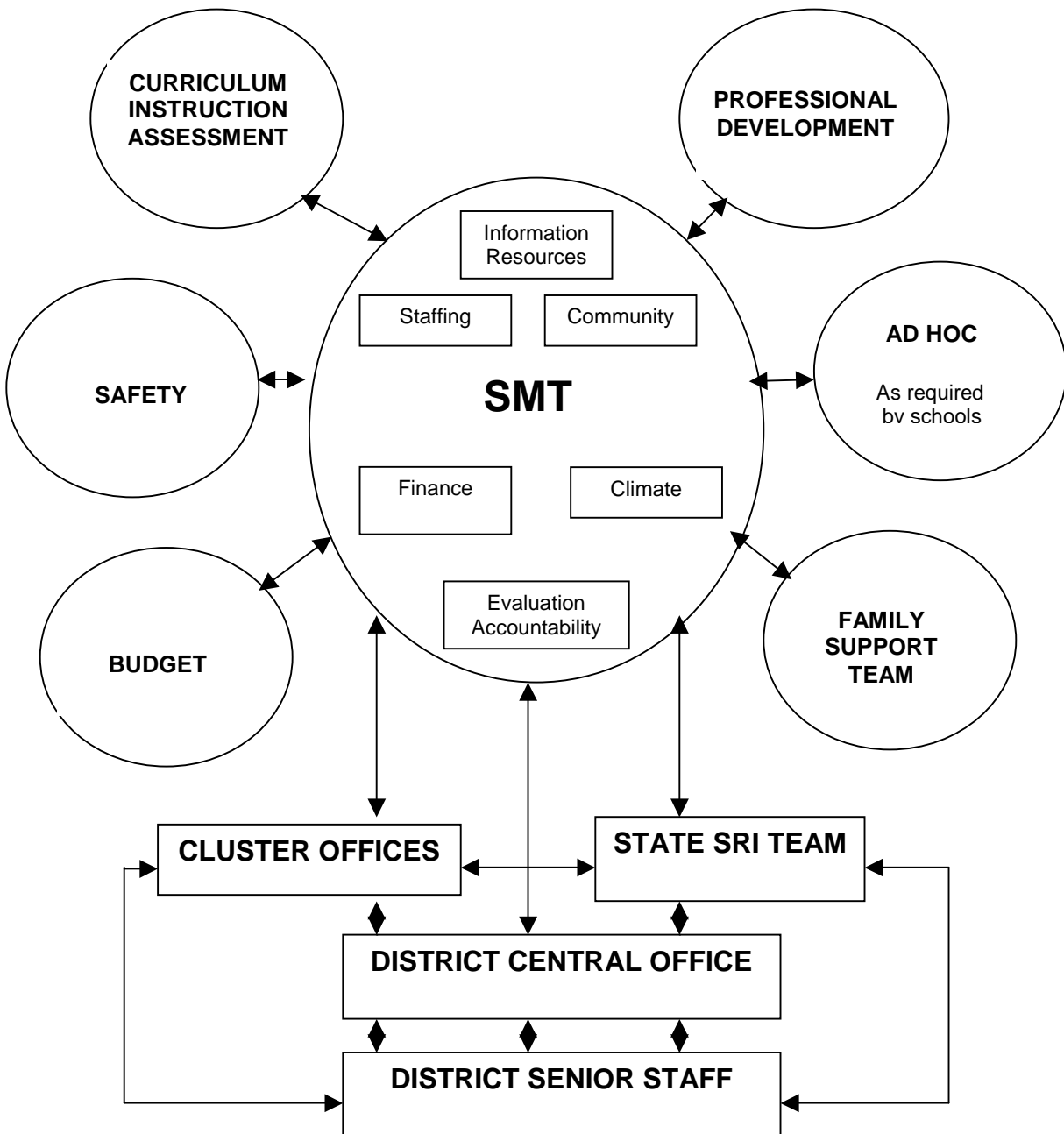


Figure C

Sample School Management Team Structure Middle and High School SMT Work Group Structure

The areas included in work groups for secondary schools are expanded to include the required programs in secondary schools. The committee listed in each box represents a work group that reports back to the SMT.

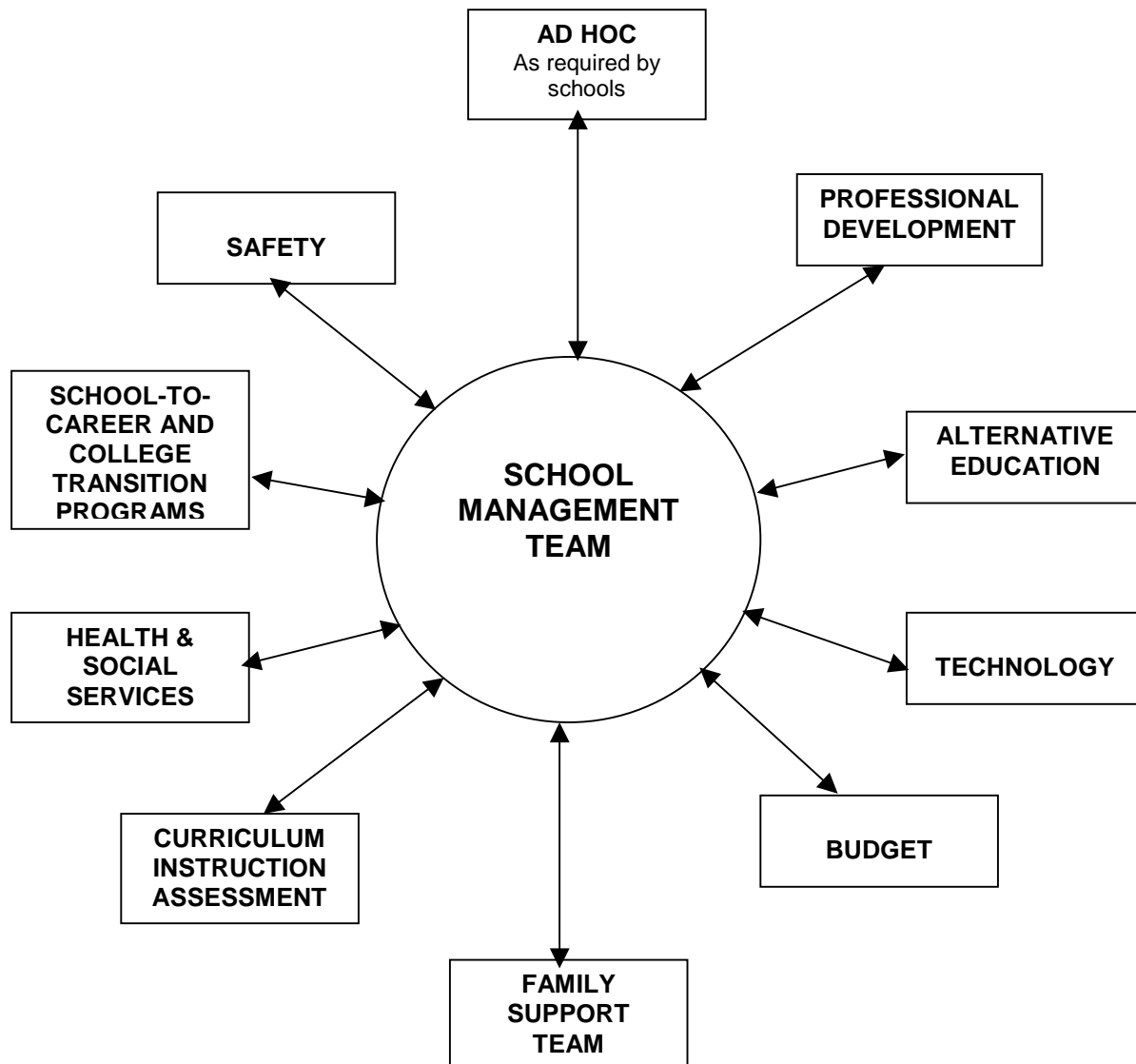


Figure D

H. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

One mechanism for central office support and assistance that districts have used in the past that has proven to be effective is a district steering committee. It is, therefore, recommended as a possible approach. The purpose of a steering committee is to assist SMTs in the implementation of school improvement. Successful change in schools occurs with continuous support from the district, including involving specialists from all areas (e.g., Special Education, Specialized Populations, School-to-Career and College, Health and Social Services, etc.) in the planning process. The following characteristics are essential in providing for successful systemic change:

- The district, school and developer working together;
- The alignment of the CCCS from the district to school level;
- Cohesive interrelationships of all main components of the system;
- A professional development program that supports the initiative;
- A mechanism to institutionalize the innovations;
- Articulation across grades and school feeder patterns; and
- An effective communications system.

It is expected that the WSR developers will be an ongoing source of technical assistance. This should include working with individual schools, groups of schools within the district and with the district's central office staff. Developer collaboration with mandated program personnel will help ensure articulation between the model and requirements in code and law. In working with each level in the district, the developer can help leverage the district's collective expertise in support of WSR.

The DOE, through its various offices (including the SRI teams of the PIRCs and the county offices), provides technical assistance to schools in implementing WSR and supporting student attainment of the CCCS. Section II of this manual outlines the role of the Program Improvement Regional Centers (PIRCs). Additionally, each PIRC has SRI staff assigned to WSR models currently being implemented. For technical assistance on a particular model, schools should contact the PIRC in their region (see Section XI of this guide for regional locations). School and district personnel should also utilize the department's website and should actively network with other schools, both within and outside of their district, to obtain information and share ideas.

WSR networks have been established in New Jersey for Abbott schools and districts. The networks are a collaborative effort of the DOE, WSR developers, and Abbott districts and schools. The networks provide essential opportunities for cross-district problem-solving and ongoing professional development. Networks meet regularly and welcome participation of interested schools (see Section XI of this guide for contact information).